



Skeleton Dance (The Gideon Oliver Mysteries Book 10)

By Aaron Elkins



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Les?Eyzies?de?Tayac is known for three things: pâté de fois gras, truffles, and prehistoric remains. The little village, in fact, is the headquarters of the prestigious Institute de Préhistoire, which studies the abundant local fossils. But when a pet dog emerges from a nearby cave carrying parts of a human skeleton—by no means a fossilized one—Chief Inspector Lucien Anatole Joly puts in a call to his old friend, Gideon Oliver, the famed “Skeleton Detective.”

Once Gideon arrives, murder piles on murder, puzzle on puzzle, and twist follows twist in a series of unexpected events that threaten to tear the once sober, dignified Institut apart. It takes a bizarre and startling forensic breakthrough by Gideon to bring to an end a trail of deception thirty?five thousand years in the making.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Forensic anthropologist Gideon Oliver and his wife Julie have planned a relaxing four-week European jaunt that will allow Gideon to collect material for his upcoming book. But when a local dog digs up some very tasty--and very modern--human bones at a prehistoric site in the French Dordogne, Gideon gets a call for deductive assistance from old friend Inspector Lucien Joly. It appears that the bones are connected to the Institut de Préhistoire, epicenter of the academic debate on the proper place of Neanderthals in the progression of human evolution.

Years ago, the Institut's director, Ely Carpenter, found startling archaeological evidence that Neanderthal Man was a sensitive being with an appreciation of beauty and art: when that evidence was exposed as a fraud, Carpenter committed suicide. Or did he? These days, the remaining members of the Institut are still at dagger's (or perhaps Middle Paleolithic Acheulian cordiform hand ax's) edge. Half of them argue for the Neanderthals as card-carrying Homo sapiens, and the other half want to fling them from the family tree altogether. The academic debate is vicious, indeed--but when more bodies start to appear, Gideon must dig deep into layers of personal animosity and professional rivalry to determine which of his anthropological colleagues has more than a monograph at stake.

Aaron Elkins is the author of a number of Gideon Oliver mysteries, including the Edgar Award-winning *Old Bones*. It is a tribute to his skill that the dusty fragments of bone at the heart of this latest outing will capture his readers' interest, and that the ramifications of a scientific dispute seem the perfect motive for murder. *Skeleton Dance* carries as well all the touches that have made his previous novels successful: a genial protagonist who wavers between sharp-eyed precision and absent-minded obliviousness; an assortment of well-drawn minor characters (though their foibles may be sketched a bit too broadly, as Elkins stretches for a touch of humor); and a cozy evocation of local atmosphere. If the music of *Skeleton Dance* is a tune we've heard before, and the steps are a trifle well-worn, it doesn't really matter; Elkins is such a skilled partner that we'll find ourselves tapping our feet and turning the pages in easy rhythm. --*Kelly Flynn*

From Publishers Weekly

Academic infighting, at once comically petty and deadly serious, is the subject of Elkins's terrific follow-up to *Old Bones*, winner of the 1988 Edgar Award for best novel. This time, celebrated Seattle "skeleton detective" Gideon Oliver travels to the quaint French village of Les Eyzies to aid police in the identification of some human bones. At first, the bones were thought to be prehistoric fossils, common enough in a town famous for its Paleolithic caves and the world-class Institut de Pr?histoire. But closer examination reveals the deceased to have been murdered sometime within the past five years, possibly by someone linked to the institute. Gideon, now on sabbatical leave from his professorship to write a book on scientific bloopers, begins interviewing the institute's five French and American members about a notorious archeological hoax perpetrated by the former director, elusive American Ely Carpenter. The more Gideon learns about the hoax, the more he's convinced of a connection to the unidentified bones. When Gideon is attacked and the bones stolen, it's clear that one of the five scientists is responsible--probably for murder, as well. Every suspect is a full-blown comic creation capable of surprise, from the absent-minded Jacques Beaupierre, who crosses the street "somewhat in the manner of a soft-bodied sea creature undulating over the ocean floor," to the pompous ?mile Grize, who affects bow ties depicting "egg yolks exploding in a microwave oven." Mischievous wit, fascinating erudition, juicy (but never mean-spirited) academic gossip and a gorgeous setting redolent with Gitanes and goose liver combine to make this mystery an especially delectable treat.

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From [Booklist](#)

Forensic anthropologist Gideon Oliver and his intrepid wife, Julie, are visiting France while Gideon researches a book on scientific hoaxes and follies. His work brings him to a prestigious archaeological institute that was rocked several years earlier by a scandal concerning phony Neanderthal artifacts. When a scavenging dog discovers the bones of a murdered Homo sapiens in a cave that shouldn't have been inhabited by anyone more recent than a Cro-Magnon, Gideon is invited by Inspector Lucien Jory to assist in the identification of the victim and the investigation of the crime. The result is an entertaining and informative excursion through the prehistory and cuisine of rural France. Jory and Gideon work well together sorting out the academic intrigue while engaging in a subtle form of forensic competition. The only drawback is a rushed ending that leaves a number of frustrating loose ends. The flaw isn't fatal, though, and this latest entry in a popular series will find many eager readers. *George Needham*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Rosalva Nichols:

Do you have favorite book? If you have, what is your favorite's book? Publication is very important thing for us to learn everything in the world. Each e-book has different aim or even goal; it means that book has different type. Some people experience enjoy to spend their time and energy to read a book. They are really reading whatever they acquire because their hobby is reading a book. Consider the person who don't like looking at a book? Sometime, man feel need book after they found difficult problem or even exercise. Well, probably you will want this Skeleton Dance (The Gideon Oliver Mysteries Book 10).

Shirley Wales:

Reading can called mind hangout, why? Because when you find yourself reading a book specifically book entitled Skeleton Dance (The Gideon Oliver Mysteries Book 10) your thoughts will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in every single aspect that maybe unknown for but surely will become your mind friends. Imaging every single word written in a book then become one type conclusion and explanation that will maybe you never get just before. The Skeleton Dance (The Gideon Oliver Mysteries Book 10) giving you another experience more than blown away the mind but also giving you useful information for your better life in this era. So now let us demonstrate the relaxing pattern this is your body and mind will probably be pleased when you are finished looking at it, like winning a. Do you want to try this extraordinary paying spare time activity?

Catherine Hershey:

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Millie Goodman:

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